

SECTION A: Preliminary Amendments to the Specification

Please replace paragraph [0029] with the following amended paragraph:

A plurality of wedge pads 48, best illustrated in the side view of Figure 8, provide substrates for the attachment of wedges 60, best illustrated in Figure 9. In this embodiment, the wedge pads 48 are each provided with a cylindrical surface 53 that is bounded by radial surfaces 55 and 57. It is these cylindrical surfaces 53 of the wedge pads 48 which are configured to receive the wedges 60. These wedges 60 can be adhered, welded, machined or otherwise disposed in a fixed relationship with an associated one of the cylindrical surfaces 53. In a preferred embodiment, best illustrated in Fig. 9, the wedge 60 has a broad end 62 and a narrow end 64 with side surfaces 66 and 68 which extend between a concave surface 71 and a convex surface 73. These elements are also illustrated in the top plan view of Figure 10. Of course, the wedges 60, ~~62~~ may have other than a triangular configuration; for example, a round pin may be of particular advantage in a different embodiment.

Please replace paragraph [0030] with the following amended paragraph:

With further reference to Figure 1, it can be seen that when operatively disposed, the wedges 60 are mounted with the concave surface 71 fixed to the cylindrical surface 53 of the wedge pad 48. In a preferred embodiment, the wedges 60 are mirrored. Importantly, the wedges 60 are mounted within respected slots 32, with the broad end 62 of the wedge 60 facing the wide end 34 of the slot 32 and the narrow end 64 of the wedge 60 facing the narrow end 36 of the slot 32. Other wedges ~~602~~ are similarly disposed on the opposite side of the shaft 10 and oriented as a mirror image of the wedges 60 in the slots 42.

Please replace paragraph [0031] with the following amended paragraph:

In operation, the inner tube 14 can be rotated relative to the outer tube 12 to move the wedges 60 and ~~62~~ within their respective slots 32 and 42. When the inner tube is turned counterclockwise with respect to the outer tube 14, the wedges 60 move toward the narrow end 36 of the slots 32, upwardly in Figure 1. As this movement occurs, the wedges 60 tend to separate the walls defining the slots 32. As a result, the side of the tube 12 which has the slots 32 and the wedges 60, tends to elongate. This same counterclockwise rotation moves the wedges ~~60~~₂ downwardly toward the broad end of the slots 42. This permits the side of the tube 12 having the slots 42 and wedges ~~60~~₂ to contract. This opposing expansion and contraction articulates the outer tube 12 as well as the inner tube 14 so that the entire shaft 10 tends to bend away from the slots 32 and towards the slots 38. It will be noted that the direction the inner tube 14 is turned is an angular direction, while the direction the outer tube 12 is bent is a linear direction.

Please replace paragraph [0032] with the following amended paragraph:

The opposite effect is achieved when the inner tube 14 is rotated clockwise with respect to the outer tube 12. In this case, the wedges ~~60~~₂ move toward the narrow end of their slots 42 causing those slots to expand and the associated side of the tube 12 to elongate. The wedges 60 are moved toward the wider end of their slots 32 to permit contraction of their side of the tube 12. As a result, the shaft 10 tends to articulate away from the slots 38 and towards the slots 32. This articulation of the distal end 21 of the shaft 10 is accomplished merely by rotating the tubes 12 and 14 relative to each other at the proximal end 18 to the shaft 10.

Please replace paragraph [0033] with the following amended paragraph:

It will be appreciated that in another embodiment of the invention, the tubes 12 and 14 could be switched. In such an embodiment, the wedges 60 and ~~62~~ would be carried on an inner surface of the outer tube and would be moveable within radial slots created in the inner tube.

Please replace paragraph [0034] with the following amended paragraph:

In another embodiment, the wedges 60 and ~~62~~, could be replaced generally with any structure moveable within radial slots to alternatively expand and contract these slots on opposing sides of the shaft. As an example and not by way of limitation, the wedges 60 and ~~62~~ may be replaced with round pins, for instance.

Please replace paragraph [0035] with the following amended paragraph:

One advantage associated with the present invention relates to the tendency of the wedges 60 and ~~62~~ to remain at any given point within the associated slots 32, 34 until the tubes 12 and 14 are again actively rotated relative to each other. This locking feature of the associated embodiment, is achieved by the frictional resistance encountered between the wedges 60, ~~62~~ and the associated sides of their respective slots 32 and 38. The locking feature can be further enhanced by adding frictional resistance in the form of detents located on the proximal control sections. In general, the locking feature permits the surgeon to articulate the shaft to a particular curve configuration and to know that the shaft 10 will retain that degree of curvature until it is changed by the surgeon.